

Futures: Housing Work Group Meets

The Futures housing work group met for the first time on Thursday and will focus on the importance of affordable housing for individuals who have been at Vermont State Hospital or who may be at risk of hospitalization. Futures Group members Ken Liberto and Linda Corey were joined by Hillary Cole, manager of the Save Haven project of the Clara Martin Center, and Brian Smith of the Health Department in a dialogue with Greg Shinn of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, mental health agency. Shinn detailed the circumstances and housing needs in Tulsa when a local hospital closed there. He discussed the assessment of need, and the subsequent development of a strategy to fund and sustain housing options. He will send templates he used for the group to review. Smith will secure and disseminate information on a recent survey conducted regarding housing contingency funds. Cole will furnish statistics from Safe Haven on cost benefits and outcomes. The group's next meeting will be held in 3-4 weeks.

Futures: Architecture+ to Meet Consumers

Representatives from Architecture+, the firm investigating Vermont's options for new psychiatric inpatient capacities, will meet with a focus group of consumers next week (see details in meeting listings, below). The focus group host, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, has compiled a report of patient preferences from survey results, Vermont State Hospital report cards and other sources. The report is posted on the Mental Health Update web page. An Architecture+ work team will spend a day on-site at Fletcher Allen, evaluating options for siting the new inpatient facility.

Slides from the A+ meeting with the facilities work group on February 21 are posted on the Mental Health Update web page, as are notes from a VSH staff focus group that met with A+ on March 3.

Futures: Upcoming Legislative Briefings

State officials will be briefing the House Republican caucus about the Mental Health Futures Initiative on Tuesday, March 14 (tentative time: noon) and testifying before the Senate Institutions Committee between 3 and 4:30 p.m. the same day. (The House Democratic caucus recently received a similar briefing, as did the Chittenden County legislative delegation.) They will be before the House Human Services Committee at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 15, and before the joint Mental Health Oversight Committee between noon and 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 22.

Futures: City Council Gets Futures Update

Health Commissioner Paul Jarris has written to the Burlington City Council to offer an update on the possibility of a new inpatient facility on or near the Fletcher Allen campus. His letter is scheduled to be presented to the council at its meeting on Monday. Human Services Secretary Cindy LaWare also has written to the Ward One Neighborhood Planning Assembly, asking for

time at the April NPA meeting to present information and take questions on the same topic. (Both letters are posted on the Mental Health Update web page.) The NPA has responded, welcoming the input. The next NPA meeting, set for April 12, conflicts with Passover and may be rescheduled. Details will be published here when available. Health Department staff also will meet with Burlington city department heads on March 27 to provide information and gather feedback.

Futures: Informational Handouts Posted

Based on feedback, two informational handouts illustrating the Mental Health Futures Plan have been revised. Current versions of each are posted on the Mental Health Update web page, and further feedback is welcome.

Futures Group Draft Minutes Amended

The draft minutes of the February 24 Futures Group meeting have been amended to add an item to the list of issues raised at the meeting for further discussion. Under the section beginning *“The committee used much of the rest of the time to offer questions they would like answered and issues they would like to see addressed. They included:”* the added text is as follows: *“Involuntary care and concerns about its creeping expansion: we need to address the fundamental issue of building a system to comport with the policy that we work towards a system free of coercion.”* The revised draft minutes are posted on the Mental Health Update web page under the March 3 Update.

Department of Justice To Return to Vermont State Hospital

Although the final legal agreement between the State of Vermont and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has not been fully executed, the two parties have agreed upon dates for DOJ's next visit to Vermont State Hospital. DOJ attorneys and psychiatric experts will be at the hospital from May 8 through 12. The purpose of the visit is to get a baseline assessment of conditions at the hospital from which improvements will be measured during the time that DOJ retains jurisdiction over the hospital under the pending agreement. Last July, DOJ sent the State a letter detailing the findings of its investigation into civil rights issues at the hospital during the summer of 2004. DOJ, the Health Department and the Vermont Attorney General's Office have been in compliance negotiations since last summer, and a binding settlement agreement addressing the issues raised by the findings is expected to be made public soon.

Seminar Offers Nurse's Perspective on Patient Care at VSH

Kate Plummer, MSN, RN, will present “A Nurse's Perspective on Patient Care at Vermont State Hospital” from noon till 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 16, in the VSH Medical Director's Office. The presentation is part of the Seminars in Public Psychiatry series sponsored by the University of Vermont's Division of Public Psychiatry and the Vermont Department of Health.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Vermont State Hospital Futures Advisory Group**
 - March 20, 2-4:30 p.m., Room 100, Stanley Hall, Waterbury State Office Complex.

- April: An April meeting is planned and will be scheduled soon.
- May 15, 2-4:30 p.m., Skylight Conference Room, Waterbury State Office Complex.
- June 26, 2- 4:30 p.m., Skylight Conference Room, Waterbury State Office Complex.
- **Futures Clinical Care Management Work Group (*Please note change of date*)**
 - NOTE CHANGE: ~~April 7~~ April 28, 9-11 a.m., Skylight Conference Room, Waterbury State Office Complex.
- **Futures Residential Recovery (sub-acute) Work Group (*Please note change of locations*)**
 - March 15, 9-11 a.m., Washington County Mental Health Services, ~~9 Heaton Street, Montpelier~~ 2 Moody Court, Waterbury (green building east of railroad station).
 - April 5, 9-11 a.m., Washington County Mental Health Services, ~~9 Heaton Street, Montpelier~~ 2 Moody Court, Waterbury (green building east of railroad station).
 - April 26, 9-11 a.m., Washington County Mental Health Services, ~~9 Heaton Street, Montpelier~~ 2 Moody Court, Waterbury (green building east of railroad station).
- **Futures Facilities Work Group (With Architecture+)**
 - March 14, 11 a.m., (Vermont Psychiatric Survivors-hosted consumer focus group), Room 3B, Health Department, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington.
 - ~~March 14, 1-4 p.m., Room 3B, Health Department, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington.~~ This meeting has been cancelled. An A+ work team will spend the day on-site at Fletcher Allen, evaluating options for siting the new inpatient facility. (The 11 a.m. focus group, above, will go as scheduled.)
 - April 3, 1-4 p.m., Room 3B, Health Department, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington.
 - May 22, 1-4 p.m., Room 3B, Health Department, 108 Cherry Street, Burlington.
 - June 12, all day, for presentations; various locations to be announced.
- **Statewide Program Standing Committee for Adult Mental Health**
 - March 13, 1 – 4:30 p.m., Skylight Room, Waterbury State Office Complex. Agenda is posted on the Mental Health Update web page.
- **One-time Meeting To Discuss ONH Scheduling**
 - March 22, 10 – 11:30 a.m. Claudia Stone Conference Room, Hanks Building, Waterbury State Office Complex.

Spring Calendar Lists Training Events

A calendar of training events for community adult mental health practitioners has been posted on the Mental Health Update web page.

VSH Census

The Vermont State Hospital census was 48 as of midnight Thursday night. The average census for the past 45 days was slightly more than 48.
